

The Language of Imperialism in British Electoral Politics, 1880-1910

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'C is for colonies. Rightly we boast, that of all the great nations, Great Britain has most'

'E is our Empire where the sun never sets. The larger we make it, the bigger it gets'

The above quotations are taken from Mrs. Ernest Ames' popular children's picture book *An ABC for Baby Patriots*, published in 1899.¹ While clearly not every child of late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain was brought up on books like the *ABC*, they are often seen as exemplars of the public's close cultural relationship with Empire and its tangible impact on everyday life, or what Robert MacDonald has called the era's 'Imperialist worldview'.² As the empire seemed to have strongly permeated the national consciousness of this era, it is interesting – and crucially important – to investigate how and how far this popular feeling manifested itself in the arena of politics, particularly during election campaigns which routinely brought people and politicians together in mass public meetings where platform speeches would be delivered.³ This article provides a wide-ranging analysis of the issue of imperialism in electoral politics during this thirty-year period, particularly focussing on its presentation by Liberal and Conservative politicians. In particular, it asks which party used imperialism more often, when, and which benefitted most from it politically. It also investigates how imperialism intersected with patriotism in the electoral arena in these years, and to what extent the two became effectively interchangeable.

The recent historiography of imperialism in political history has clearly been influenced by cultural historians' focus on Empire's domestic resonance since the 1980s, and the popular 'maximalist' thesis: that imperialism was a key paradigm through which contemporaries viewed, understood, and expressed British politics, culture, and society in the 1880-1914 period. John Mackenzie is one of its best-known proponents, as is Stuart Ward, who has suggested that 'the vast body of work on Empire and metropolitan culture has collectively shown [that] an imperial outlook had been an integral feature of British public life'.⁴ They find strong recent support from Catherine Hall and Sonya Rose, and the eleven other contributors to the influential edited collection *At Home with the Empire*. Indeed, Antoinette Burton argues in her chapter on political culture that 'for historians of the nineteenth century, the question is, arguably, not whether Empire had an impact on domestic life, but how' and that 'imperial questions impinged upon and helped to shape Victorian democracy across the nineteenth century'.⁵ Andrew Thompson, meanwhile, sees imperialism as 'a broadly-based participatory movement [which]...drew in people of differing political persuasions... [and] penetrated the grassroots of British politics'.⁶

This 'maximalist' thesis chimes with political historian Alex Windscheffel's recent description of elections in late-Victorian London as 'imbricated with the cultures of imperialism' and 'suffused with imperial and racialised discourses', as it does with Matthew Roberts' highlighting of the 'late-Victorian imperial mentality' as a central unifier of 'villa tory' and 'working-class Conservative' appeals in Leeds.⁷ It is also consistent with older histories of political parties which stressed the importance of imperialism to Conservative language and ideology in particular from the 1870s on.⁸ For H.C.G. Matthew, Disraeli's Crystal Palace speech of 1872 'seized the wand of patriotism from the dead Palmerston's hand, captured the initiative from the Liberal Party on the dominant theme of late Victorian Britain- imperialism'.⁹ Thompson argues that Disraeli's particular achievement was to rhetorically refashion the idea of Empire, replacing its traditional mid-Victorian connotations of authoritarianism and Napoleonic expansionism with a jingoistic celebration of England's providential destiny, superior civilisation, and military might.¹⁰ It is thus unsurprising that histories of the

1880s and 1890s particular emphasis on Empire: it is central to Richard Shannon's *Age of Salisbury* and Robert Rhodes James sees them as the decades where 'the domestic political dividends of an Imperial attitude were at their greatest' especially for the Conservatives who were 'emphatically...the Imperial Party, the Patriotic Party'.¹¹ John Charmley is equally categorical, asserting that 'the fact that it hardly seems worth mentioning that the Conservatives were the party of Empire...is itself proof of the success of Disraeli's work', while E.H.H. Green contends that the Home Rule Crisis and the birth of 'Unionism' in 1886 brought into play the Tories' 'the patriotic-imperial card'.¹² For the Liberals, the years from Gordon's death in Khartoum in 1885 (and especially from the emergence of the 'Liberal Imperialist' faction under Rosebery from 1895) are seen as marking the start of an uncomfortable relationship with Empire, characterised by an intellectual and ideological suspicion of reckless territorial expansion, which rendered it a double-edged rhetorical resource at election time.¹³

While the 1880s and 1890s are characterised by consensus on the sustained centrality of imperialism in popular politics for Conservatives in particular, the debate becomes more complex when we reach the twentieth-century. The so-called 'khaki' election of 1900 – fought five months after the relief of Mafeking and when the South African war seemed all but won – has particularly fascinated historians.¹⁴ For many scholars – including Paul Readman, Iain Sharpe, Jonathan Schneer, and Windscheffel – this wartime election encouraged Unionist speakers to push imperialism hard, and forge a new khaki patriotism which emphasised veneration of the military, and castigated the Liberals for their 'Pro-Boer' faction.¹⁵ This scholarship is a refutation of Richard Price's argument that the 'khaki' label is a misnomer, and that in most constituencies, the war was subordinate to social reform as an election issue.¹⁶ Despite recent criticism, numerous general works have offered Price explicit support, also arguing that imperialism generated little enthusiasm amongst voters.¹⁷ Turning finally to the Edwardian period, historians generally agree that the declining position in South Africa from 1902 saw the electorate lose their appetite for globe-trotting and bellicosely khaki Salisburyian imperialism, and warm towards Campbell-Bannerman's 'true patriotism' which stressed a broader love of country and the amelioration of social conditions at home.¹⁸ The humanitarian outcry against the 'Randlord' Transvaal mine-owners' use of 'Chinese slavery' from 1902 also undoubtedly played into Liberal hands. In 1903, however, Joseph Chamberlain dramatically counter-attacked with his famous proposition of Tariff Reform (or 'Colonial Preference') whose imperial dimensions have – as Thompson rightly points out – been largely overlooked by most accounts of the 1906 election.¹⁹ For the twin contests of 1910, historians have placed relatively little emphasis on Empire as an issue, with it confined mainly to the ongoing argument on tariffs, and (for Unionists) a renewed opposition to Irish separatism.²⁰

While this discussion on the ebb and flow of Empire as an election issue over these decades is important, recent scholarship has been primarily preoccupied with the related linguistic question of the degree to which discourses of imperialism and patriotism were contested. For Thompson, Macdonald, Readman, Roberts, Miles Taylor and numerous others, the terms 'patriotic' and 'imperial' were the object of continual rhetorical struggles for ownership between parties, pressure groups, and influential individuals.²¹ Thompson likens the terms to 'an array of empty boxes waiting to be filled, emptied, and refilled by competing discourses'.²² This new thinking has heralded a notable retreat from the traditional simple view that the Conservatives were unambiguously the party of Empire, and instead stresses that political appeals to imperialism and patriotism had to be constructed and shaped according to geography, time, and audience. For Windscheffel, 'the language of imperialism remained a contestable terrain in the late-Victorian metropolis' while Roberts contends that the Conservatives had no 'monopoly on these assets...they were contestable concepts'.²³ Green, meanwhile, argues that imperialism's status as a Conservative value was 'neither 'natural' nor 'well-established' while Readman counters Hugh Cunningham's assertion that Conservatives enjoyed a near-monopoly on patriotism by contending that 'even at the general election of 1900... Liberal Candidates –

'pro-Boer' as well as 'Liberal Imperialists' – were able to articulate various languages of patriotism'.²⁴ Indeed, that historians now view both imperialism and patriotism (in common with many other political ideas and concepts) as rhetorically fractured and contested is reflected by the recent fashion of referring not to their language, but their 'languages'.²⁵

This recent approach, influenced by the poststructuralist 'linguistic turn', has undoubtedly brought profound benefits in sensitising scholarship to numerous nuances and counter-trends which were overlooked in traditional interpretations of the languages of imperialism and patriotism. However, it has also brought with it two major shortcomings. The first is that historians' preoccupation with the contested nature of these discourses has made recent accounts extremely reluctant to assess power and political advantage – in other words, whether Unionists or Liberals were the dominant users of the languages of imperialism and patriotism, when they used them, and which party profited from them electorally. Indeed, when the 'contested' reading is placed alongside the other popular view outlined above – that Empire was a dominating societal and political paradigm of the period – we are left with the rather unhelpful conclusion that the language of imperialism was used by almost everyone, and could mean almost anything. The second shortcoming is that historians have been unhelpfully vague on the difference, if any, between the languages of patriotism and imperialism. Thompson for example has argued that 'by the 1890s, it was becoming difficult to separate patriotism and imperialism'.²⁶ This tendency to see them as one and the same is epitomized by phrases such as 'patriotic-imperial card' (Green), 'imperialistic and patriotic appeals' (Price), and 'the "trump" electioneering cards of patriotism and imperialism' (Roberts).²⁷ Given the interesting recent finding that patriotic discourses took a notable 'domestic turn' from 1902, it seems surprising that even recent accounts preoccupied with linguistic nuance have made little effort to disentangle the shifting relationship between these two key political concepts.

This article attempts to overcome these two shortcomings. Its method is to introduce quantification into this debate, which has thus far been conducted exclusively qualitatively. The current inability to measure scope and typicality in language is the core problem which renders the argument between the 'maximalists' and their 'minimalist' opponents in cultural history virtually insoluble. It is also responsible for the differing interpretations on the impact of imperialism as an issue at the various elections in this period. Thompson and Simon Potter have rightly highlighted the inherent difficulty of gauging the impact of Empire across political discourse, with the latter arguing that 'different historians have adopted very different criteria for deciding what evidence is relevant, and for assessing the significance of that evidence'.²⁸ In political history, for example, a complete corpus of newspaper reports from a single general election speaking campaign alone easily comprises vastly more text than a scholar could hope to manually analyse in several decades. Given that virtually all historians face similar textual forests, it seems inevitable that scholars will continually return from their respective patches of woodland with conflicting sets of selected qualitative evidence *ad infinitum*. Rewarding as this forensic approach can be, its natural downside is that each reading of the primary source material reveals more than it explains. New cultures, discourses, and identities emerge that demand separate study, and push us ever further away from even tentative generalisations or explanations. This article thus prioritises a distant rather than close reading, and conducts a holistic 'big data' analysis of the issue of imperialism in election campaigns in these thirty years. It utilises computer-driven electronic text-analysis methodologies developed in Corpus Linguistics (often called 'text mining') and a specially-compiled corpus of five million words of digitised national and constituency party platform speeches, taken from newspapers.

This article uses corpora – alongside qualitative cases studies – to make three major arguments about the prevalence on key themes in electoral language, and their presentation by politicians. Its first (outlined in Section II below) develops a suggestion I have made elsewhere: that historians have exaggerated the continued centrality of imperialism in election campaigns throughout the 1880-1910 period, and that Empire was actually

a significant issue only intermittently, most particularly during the 'khaki election'.²⁹ While the article strongly supports historians' recent rejection of Price's influential thesis, it contends that this strikingly imperial campaign was very much an outlier in these three decades, and that historians have wrongly relied on it to sustain a general theory which does not hold throughout the period. While, on face value, the finding that the 1900 election was the most imperial contest in the period is not surprising, its significance lies the *degree* of difference revealed between it and other contests where we also have reason to expect imperialism was important: notably 1880, 1885, and especially 1895. This last election is frequently grouped with 1900 as a Unionist landslide carried by imperialism, but the corpora suggest that it was in fact one of the least imperial contests in the period. 1900 was thus not simply the highest peak in a range of mountains, but one which dwarfed some (but not all) others. This analysis thus poses a challenge for the majority of historians discussed above, who must explain why imperialism should be thought of as politically central when politicians relatively seldom mentioned the empire from the platform in the six elections outside of 1900, 1906, and 1886.

This article's second argument (Section III) concerns the 'contested' nature of imperialism and patriotism, and the resulting reluctance of historians to offer judgements on which party exploited them more often, and more successfully, from the platform in these years. In reference to imperialism specifically, this article argues that the traditional reading that Conservatives unambiguously forwarded the more imperial appeal is a fair one, notwithstanding the aforementioned vital caveat that neither party emphasised Empire as much as historians generally believed. Rather than reinforcing a familiar (but now widely questioned) interpretation, this analysis adds a vital dimension by quantifying the *size* of the Tory rhetorical advantage, enabling us to judge whether they led merely by a nose, or by several lengths. As a broad (but strikingly consistent) generalisation, Conservatives – across elections, constituencies, and at the top of the party to the grassroots – mentioned the empire and related vocabulary close to twice as often as Liberals did, and spent close to twice as long talking about it. They also connected it much more relentlessly to politically charged and emotional values such as integrity, stability, and glory, whereas Liberals tended to talk about it in more neutral and administrative terms. Conservatives did not thus possess a monopoly on imperialism, but they *did* enjoy a strong rhetorical advantage.

The third argument (Sections IV and V) is based largely on qualitative case-studies of the campaigns of 1900 and 1906 in East Anglia. It is that historians have overemphasised the interchangeability of imperialism and patriotism as political values in this period. This article does not argue that these discourses can always be reliably separated, but it does contend that the Conservative platform particularly benefitted from an appeal to imperialism in the unique circumstances of the 1900 election because they successfully made a bellicose and militaristic 'khaki' appeal synonymous with patriotism, while the 'sane imperialism' of Rosebery, Morley, and Campbell-Bannerman – for all its intellectual merits – appeared both convoluted and unpatriotic in comparison. However, the speaking campaign in 1900 was not typical, and just over five years later in 1906, the boot was placed on the other foot. In this election, the changed political climate saw the languages of imperialism and patriotism, which had converged in 1900, once again diverge. While Chamberlain successfully installed 'Imperial Preference' at the centre of the 1906 campaign, the spectre of rising food prices gave the Liberals the rhetorical artillery to question the patriotism of the Unionist vision of imperialism, and thus to disentangle the two concepts. By advocating a broader 'love of country' which championed the working classes' material and consumer interests through a defence of Free Trade, the Liberal emphasis on domestic above colonial concerns successfully appealed, as their opponents had in 1900, to passions just as much as to rationality. It was thus patriotism which was the more vigorously contested political value in late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain, and one which became synonymous with imperialism only very occasionally: namely in the specific context of

a khaki election. The historiographical over-reliance on 1900 has thus led scholars to exaggerate the extent to which these two values were consistently interchangeable in the political arena in these thirty years.

II

Imperialism and Electoral Politics, 1880-1910

Perhaps the simplest question we can ask of general elections in this period is also the most challenging: namely, what were they actually about? In particular, which issues were emphasised by candidates and parties in speeches across the country, and where, when, and how did imperialism fit into this matrix?³⁰ Unfortunately, in such huge discourses, the answers are far from obvious. It is deeply problematic – as constituency studies such as Jon Lawrence's Wolverhampton and Patricia Lynch's rural England have demonstrated – to assume that the orations of national leaders in and outside Parliament necessarily reflected those in six-hundred-odd constituencies in a period where local political cultures were often heterogeneous and idiosyncratic.³¹ This makes election campaigns extremely challenging to meaningfully summarise, generalise, and interpret on a national scale.

While a perfect solution to this problem is unattainable, this article attempts to get as close as feasibly possible to a generalised understanding through a systematic investigation of broad linguistic trends using multi-million word databanks of party language.³² The two main corpora presented here are composed of grassroots speeches, scanned from local newspapers.³³ The first is focussed on a specific case-study region – East Anglia – and is meticulously designed, containing identical samples of speech for each Norfolk and Suffolk constituency at each election.³⁴ The second – the 'Outside East Anglia Corpus' – contains speeches from a wide range of constituencies selected to roughly represent (as far as possible given the current availability of newspapers in digital form) political language in a diverse cross-section of seats.³⁵ A third corpus – of frontbench 'national speakers' – is also used to add context.³⁶ These high-profile speeches are taken from *The Times*, and this corpus includes every extra-parliamentary oration reported from a frontbencher from the dissolution of Parliament to the date when the last constituency declared. Together, these three corpora contain around five million words, and each is subdivided by party and by election year, with each sub-corpus (e.g. East Anglian Liberals in 1892, National Conservatives in 1900 etc.) weighted to be numerically equal. As this article covers nine elections, there are thus a total of 27 sub-corpora for each party, and 54 overall. The text mining itself (which is kept deliberately straightforward) principally involves electronically counting the occurrence of keywords and establishing common patterns between them ('concordancing') with an open-source software package, *Antconc*. Clearly, this methodology is not without controversy, and I offer a full methodological defence of corpus-driven analysis in political history, and a breakdown of how these particular corpora were compiled, elsewhere.³⁷

Our first analytical task is to assess the fluctuating significance of imperialism in election speeches across the whole 1880-1910 period. To measure the visibility of this complex and multifaceted issue, we must first select a group of keywords (a 'taxonomy') which reliably correlate to occasions where party speakers talked about the empire. In this case, I have chosen 'imperial', 'empire', 'colony', 'flag' and 'British'.³⁸ The purpose of the taxonomy is to give us a reliable (although inevitably imperfect) tracking mechanism, which can measure the salience of a given issue in a large corpus without undue complexity. These particular keywords were chosen because they correlated most strongly with occasions where speakers were talking about imperialism consistently through the whole period, and other keywords omitted because they did not correlate strongly.³⁹ These selections are of course matters of historical judgement, but are designed to capture the vast majority of relevant language, rather than represent an exhaustive mechanism which misses nothing. So in the

same way as a modern opinion poll (typically of 1,000 people, with a margin of error of three percentage points) is unlikely to perfectly represent national voting intentions, it still delivers data on broad trends and fluctuations which, if interpreted carefully, can be invaluable. These keywords (and all others in this article) were treated as 'lemmas', so 'Britain' (for example) also includes 'British', 'Britisher', 'Britannia', 'Briton' and all other derivatives. Using these five lemmas ensures my concordances miss far less relevant language than if the analysis had relied on just one. Crucially, each and every mention of a keyword is manually read and re-checked in its original context using 'keyword in context' ('KWIC') to make sure no words are included incorrectly (e.g. 'flag' referring to flag other than the Union Jack or an opponent 'flagging', and 'colony' referring to an ant nest).⁴⁰ This additional step (which is very seldom taken by other corpus-based analyses) renders this quantification extremely careful, and ensures continual cross-referencing back to the original text.⁴¹

To begin, we will measure the fluctuating visibility of imperial vocabulary throughout the 1880-1910 period in East Anglia, in constituencies outside East Anglia, and nationally. This is a very substantial analysis, and is shown as Figure 1 below. To produce comparable like-for-like readings, each sub-corpus (e.g. East Anglian Conservative 1886, National Liberal 1906 etc.) on the graph below, and throughout the article, is weighted to 50,000 words. Also, to make Figure 1 more readable, the individual scores for all five words in the imperialism taxonomy are aggregated as a single bar (so for example, the Liberal score for East Anglia in 1892 is the total for 'imperial', 'empire', 'colony', 'flag' and 'British' added together):

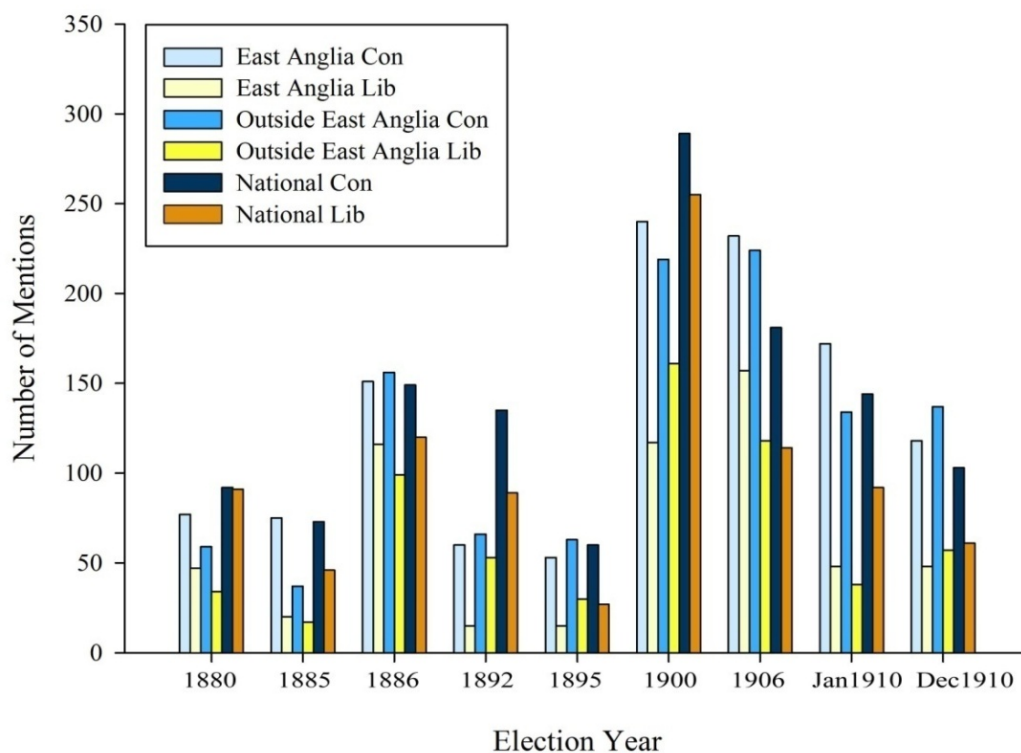


Figure 1: The Language of Imperialism, 1880-1910. Graph includes lemmas 'imperial', 'empire', 'colony', 'flag' and 'British' combined in each bar. All readings weighted to 50,000 words.

Figure 1 displays a number of striking trends. Perhaps the most interesting is that Conservatives at the constituency (in East Anglia and outside) and national levels are ahead of Liberals in each equivalent subsample in all nine elections (27 separate comparisons). Their net score – between all three corpora across all

elections – is 68% higher.⁴² In the two grassroots corpora, Conservative scores are particularly strong: roughly double that of their opponents in most individual elections, and 91% higher across all nine on aggregate.⁴³ While these discrepancies certainly could not be interpreted as a Unionist monopoly on imperialism in the localities, their leads are nonetheless metronomically consistent, and often very sizeable. On the national stage, the Tory advantage is generally more modest (especially in the Edwardian period) although this may simply reflect the automatically more national and international ambit of frontbenchers' speeches, whatever their party. However, this more balanced vocabulary distribution on the national stage arguably serves to magnify the discrepancy at the grassroots, because it suggests – in local arenas where matters of foreign and imperial policy were naturally less compulsory – that Conservative speakers nonetheless *chose* to prioritise imperialism when their Liberal opponents frequently did not. Indeed, it is also singular that the East Anglian readings are remarkably similar to those from constituencies outside the region. As well as suggesting that imperialism was a genuinely national issue whose importance in campaigns was relatively consistent throughout the country (a not insignificant finding given the importance of the 'politics of place' in this period) it also suggests that grassroots Unionists – of varying stripes and speaking up and down the country – consistently saw imperialism as more important, as a richer rhetorical resource, or both.

Figure 1 also reveals fascinating insights on the election-by-election visibility of imperialism during these three decades. Perhaps most striking are the readings for 1895, an election frequently seen as an archetype of Salisburyian imperial appeal.⁴⁴ Indeed, R.C.K. Ensor's classic textbook describes the 1895 English electorate as 'caught up into the currents of political feeling and doctrine – those of expansive imperialism – with which the unionists were ready to comply and most of the Liberals were not'.⁴⁵ Figure 1, however, suggests that the language of 1895 was in fact the least imperial of any election in this period. Indeed, imperialism's visibility in this campaign was lower than Local Veto, an issue often seen as a meagre hobby horse of Harcourt and a group of Liberal 'faddists' at the political margins.⁴⁶ It was also eclipsed by mentions of House of Lords reform, an issue which Readman has argued 'aroused no popular passions on a national scale'.⁴⁷ The relatively low priority given to Empire in this election – even by Conservative speakers – is further demonstrated by the fact that only 11% of Unionist candidates referred to it in their election addresses (behind 18 other issues).⁴⁸ It was also hardly prominent in the NUCCA speaker's guidebook for 1895: 'Unity and Integrity of the Empire' was chapter fifteen, appearing behind those on fishermen, miners, and agricultural labourers. It was also just fourteen pages in length, one of the shortest in the 636-page manual.⁴⁹ While it is easy to assume that an election (especially a Unionist landslide) held at the high water mark of British imperial supremacy must naturally have featured imperialism as a key election issue, the wider linguistic evidence suggests otherwise. In this respect, 1895 seems to bear more linguistic similarity to 1892 than it does to 1900.

More broadly, Figure 1 also suggests that imperialism was not consistently prominent throughout these nine elections. Rather, it confirms that while 1886, 1900 and 1906 featured a high concentration of imperial vocabulary, the bars for 1880, 1885, and 1892 – like 1895 – sit at a considerably lower level. While some existing accounts have already pointed to the exceptionality of 1886 and 1900 (although less so 1906) the importance of this quantification lies in the extent of the difference it illustrates. It shows that three elections (especially the two twentieth century contests) were not merely slightly, but hugely, more imperial than the others. To give further comparative context, in 1880, both the Malt Tax and the Game Laws were cited more often than the empire in East Anglian county constituencies.⁵⁰ In 1885, three proposals from Chamberlain's Unauthorised Programme – Free Education, Land Reform, and Church of England Disestablishment – each dwarfed imperialism in both grassroots corpora.⁵¹ And in 1892, the proposed reform of parish and district councils (an issue that has received negligible scholarly attention) similarly also came out ahead, except amongst national speakers.⁵² In the Edwardian period, readings for imperialism are generally higher, but in

January 1910, 'pensions' (as just a single keyword) were referred to more often by grassroots Liberals, and in December 1910, direct mentions of Balfour's dubious promise to hold a post-election referendum on Tariff Reform emerged ahead of references to 'empire' and 'imperial' combined in four of the six sub-corpora for this contest.⁵³

These comparisons – taken alongside Figure 1 – strongly suggest that the discourse of late-Victorian and Edwardian electoral politics was not consistently saturated with imperial vocabulary as has been widely assumed. Rather, Empire's visibility in political language – despite its obvious centrality to British culture, society, and thought – was unstable, and dependent on the electoral weather. Indeed, it seems fair to argue that imperialism was not unlike other political issues in this period which historians have been rather less interested in. Like the Newcastle Programme, Old Age Pensions, or Church Disestablishment, imperialism's importance could wax and wane from election to election, and it seems fairer to describe it as an issue of occasional rather than permanent importance. In this respect, this finding supports the comparatively small number studies of popular politics of this period where Empire is not singled out for special attention, such as those of Lawrence and Lynch.⁵⁴ More broadly, this conclusion serves as a reminder that the language of electoral politics did not necessarily simply passively reflect the times – or developments in high politics or political thought – but was its own independent and distinct discourse.

III

While Figure 1's word-counts are extremely enlightening, this aggregate analysis is naturally unable to shed light on how language was actually used by parties, and how key terms was connected to political arguments, values, and traditions. The corpus can once again provide invaluable assistance by illuminating key linguistic trends and broad vocabulary patterns. Taking single keywords, *Antconc* can list common collocates (words which appear in the same sentence or within a given word-span).⁵⁵ It can then rate them by 'lexical attraction', using a popular metric, the 'Mutual Information' (MI) score.⁵⁶ We can thus dig deeper into the underlying lexicography of party language in this thirty-year period. To begin, collocates of the keyword 'empire' will be tracked in both grassroots corpora (East Anglia plus other constituencies) combined, for all nine elections, to include the widest possible sample of constituency language, some 3 million words. The top twenty strongest collocates of 'empire' (for Conservatives and Liberals respectively) are shown as Figure 2 below:

Rank	Con. Collocate	Freq.	MI Score
1	dismemberment	33	12.2
2	disintegration	24	11.97
3	integrity	49	11.69
4	disruption	17	11.59
5	unity	60	11.34
6	glorious	14	10.64
7	Indian	12	10.48
8	safety	11	10.36
9	British	109	9.75
10	maintain	24	9.7
11	united	41	9.57
12	union	18	9.42
13	within	19	9.06
14	vast	10	9.01
15	Kingdom	14	8.9
16	parts	12	8.83
17	danger	12	8.71
18	welfare	10	8.7
19	heart	19	8.54
20	world	31	8.14

Rank	Lib. Collocate	Freq.	MI Score
1	integrity	27	10.82
2	disintegration	10	10.7
3	unity	21	9.76
4	British	69	9.09
5	parts	13	8.95
6	danger	12	8.71
7	part	23	7.63
8	whole	18	6.6
9	great	48	6.59
10	up	18	6.21
11	our	29	6.17
12	the	536	6.16
13	is	19	5.89
14	are	11	5.78
15	than	14	5.61
16	about	14	5.58
17	this	45	5.41
18	of	306	5.4
19	one	25	5.17
20	Ireland	11	5.11

Figure 2: Top 20 collocates of 'empire' in grassroots electoral language, 1880-1910. Conservatives are displayed left, the Liberals right.⁵⁷

Figure 2 suggests strongly that when the empire was mentioned by either party, it was usually in the context of upholding its 'unity', 'stability', and 'integrity'. However, there are also important differences between the parties. The most telling is that the words Conservatives used are in most cases self-evidently expressive of emotive political arguments, for example 'dismemberment', 'disintegration', 'disruption', 'glorious' etc. Only four Conservative words might be judged as 'neutral' at face-value ('within', 'parts', 'vast' and 'world'). For the Liberals, however, there are thirteen ('parts', 'part', 'whole', 'up', 'our', 'the', 'is', 'are', 'than', 'about', 'this', 'of' and 'one') which fit this description. Their seemingly more diluted focus is also reflected by the fact that their MI score for their twentieth collocate ('Ireland') is 5.11, whereas the Conservatives' twentieth ('world') stands at a considerably stronger 8.14. Indeed, we need to read down the Tory list to number 91 before they drop below an MI of 5.11. This all suggests that Conservative speakers did not just refer to the empire more often, but more persistently connected it to a smaller number of politically and emotionally charged values and arguments, whereas Liberal mentions were more multifarious and likelier to be neutral. This finding is also confirmed by an identical analysis tracking collocates of 'imperial', which finds six synsemantic words in the Liberal top twenty ('an', 'what', 'is', 'are', 'must', 'from') and just one ('we'- in twentieth position) for the Conservatives.⁵⁸

Figures 1 and 2 thus suggest that imperialism was a more consistently important part of the Conservative rhetorical armoury than the Liberal, both quantitatively and qualitatively. That there was a rhetorical contest for Empire is beyond doubt, but that should not stop us from concluding that it was rather one-sided. While this finding seems at face-value to reinforce the traditional reading of historians such as Shannon, Charmley and Rhodes-James that the Conservatives were the party of Empire, it also for the first time quantifies what this might actually have meant in practice. From this quantification, an important caveat emerges. Namely, that the finding that Conservative speakers talked about imperialism almost twice as often must be contextualised by the parallel observation that Empire was almost certainly a less consistently central

election issue in these three decades than these historians in particular have implied. The Conservatives led fairly unambiguously, but on an electoral race-track smaller than that hitherto imagined.

IV

Case Studies of the Elections of 1900 and 1906

This article's third and final objective is to disentangle the often-conflated languages of imperialism and patriotism. This is an inherently more qualitative question, demanding a close reading of the texts to accompany the quantitative analysis. This section therefore presents two case studies of the elections of 1900 and 1906 in East Anglia— contests which Figure 1 suggests were the most imperial in the period. There is not space to also discuss 1886 in detail, but it is worth mentioning in passing that Figures 1 and 2 provide some *prima facie* corroboration both of Savage, whose largely overlooked study of this election argues that 'Home Rule was far more potent in rousing the imperial spirit of Britain than were speeches and postures of Disraeli in the previous decade', and of Lord Salisbury, who concluded that the election had 'awakened the slumbering genius of imperialism'.⁵⁹

Turning first to 1900, the natural initial question is whether the high visibility of imperialism in this election can be explained by the South African war. Its centrality as an issue seems hard to dispute on face value: the lemmas 'Boer', 'Kruger', 'Transvaal' and 'Africa' are all sizeable new entries into the electoral vocabulary for both parties at the grassroots, and nationally.⁶⁰ In the same vein, the scores for military words ('troop', 'army', 'soldier', 'military', and 'navy') all increased hugely.⁶¹ Perhaps most strikingly, the lemma 'war' advanced over fortyfold from the previous election, from a combined East Anglian party score of 11 in 1895 to 449 in 1900, with almost identical jumps outside the region and nationally.⁶² 'War' alone in fact comprised almost 0.5% of *all words uttered* in and outside East Anglia (on par with synsemantic staples such as 'this', 'have', and 'from'). Interestingly, these linguistic developments were foreshadowed in Parliament. Using a special corpus consisting of all parliamentary debates recorded in Hansard from the year preceding the dissolutions for the 1895 and 1900 elections – and a taxonomy designed to track the war issue as holistically as possible – we find that the aggregate scores increased from 50 (year preceding 1895) to 577 (year preceding 1900).⁶³ This suggests that candidates transferred the agenda from Parliament to campaign platform. On this statistical evidence alone, the war was almost as dominant an issue as Ireland had been in 1886, and it would hardly seem unfair to similarly label 1900 as a 'single issue' election.⁶⁴ Perhaps most critically for this study, a KWIC analysis of mentions of 'empire' and 'imperial' across all corpora finds that nearly 85% were directly attributable to the war, conclusively confirming the intuitive hypothesis that it was this issue that caused the spike in the language of imperialism in this election. These findings – both the prominence of the war, and its connection with imperialist rhetoric – are obviously deeply problematic for Price's influential thesis.

Having established the centrality of the war to the language of imperialism in 1900, we can now investigate how the Conservatives managed to cast themselves as the 'patriotic party'. The bald fact that they spoke about imperialism so much more often than Liberals in and outside East Anglia is clearly important, but the subtleties of their appeal can be better understood through a closer reading. To start with, Conservative celebrations of Empire were grandiose, and left no doubt that to be an imperialist was to be a patriot. W.L. Priorleau (East-Norfolk) 'pleaded' with his audience 'to vote straight for the Unionist party, for in-so-doing they would be doing their share in upholding the glory of the greatest empire that ever existed in the world' while H.S. Foster (Lowestoft) described the purpose of the election as to 'decide whether the great British Empire was to be maintained or not...it was a battle between the Little Englander and the Big Englander'.⁶⁵ In King's Lynn, Thomas Gibson-Bowles pointed to a Union Jack pinned above his platform and asked his audience to:

‘Look at that flag ... it has a great and glorious history. There are no standards of Europe ... that have not gone down before that flag...do not forget its past. That flag floated at the mainmast of the *Victory* when Nelson sailed into action at Trafalgar; that flag waved over the British squares at Waterloo...God grant that this flag, which so many times has shaken out its folds and brought freedom to the slave, comfort to the oppressed, may once more honour the name of Victoria’.⁶⁶

Praising the empire was not simply confined to abstract jingoism. Conservatives were also not averse to celebrating the expansion of imperial territory. Harry Bullard (Norwich) boasted that ‘Lord Salisbury had demonstrated the might of the empire by sending 200,000 men 7,000 miles’, a military manoeuvre which, according to Captain Pretymann (Woodbridge) ‘no other nation could hope to accomplish’.⁶⁷ Meanwhile, Foster proudly declared that more territory had been added to the empire than in any other five-year period.⁶⁸ This swagger was arguably something new; in the 1880s, the scale of military operations and territory acquired by Disraeli and Gladstone often represented albatrosses for their parties.⁶⁹ But in 1900, the zeitgeist had transformed to the extent that W.H.B. Ffolkes (Norfolk North-West) rebutted Liberal accusations that for the cost of a single gun, 500 labourers’ families could be kept in comfort, by asking: ‘Where would the families be without that gun?...England would become a province of France...where would the Union Jack be if not for our guns?’.⁷⁰ It seems doubtful that such defence would have been inkeeping with the political weather in (for example) 1885, when rural poverty was high on the agenda in East Anglia.⁷¹ But in the charged climate of 1900, it became much easier to simply articulate love of country as being synonymous with a pride in Britain’s military capacity and ability to project force internationally.

The militaristic chord in the Unionist appeal was also helped by the fact that, in East Anglia, eight of the twenty candidates had links to the forces.⁷² These men certainly exploited their advantage; Priorleau and Edward Mann (South-Norfolk) explained their absences from their constituencies by their involvement with the Fourth Norfolk Militia.⁷³ Meanwhile, Thomas Hare (South-West Norfolk) spoke of his honour in leading his regiment in a parade through the county, Gibson-Bowles recalled his involvement in the Franco-German war during the siege of Paris, and the *Lynn Advertiser* insisted that Mid-Norfolk candidate William Boyle – who had never been in the forces – was still a military man by dint of his distant (and until now forgotten) descent from a Knight-Commander of the Hanoverian Guelphite order.⁷⁴ Clearly, Unionists were at pains to seem as close as possible to the forces in 1900 because it represented a nigh-unrebuttable trump card that the Liberals – with far fewer military men – struggled to counter.

More broadly, the popular militarism of 1900 seems to have encouraged Unionist speakers to employ the language of battle more generally. Combined readings for the lemmas ‘fight’, ‘victory’, ‘duty’, ‘honour’, ‘loyal’, ‘opponent’, ‘enemy’ and ‘strength’ registered 322 for grassroots Conservatives in and outside East Anglia: 49% higher than the equivalent score of 216 for the Liberals.⁷⁵ Electioneering efforts were presented as both soldierly and manly endeavours. The motto introduced by Mann to his South-Norfolk volunteers was to ‘fight like Bobs and win!’ and Priorleau told his followers to ‘all work like blacks, and not enter the fight with any idea they were going to lose’.⁷⁶ Ffolkes and his supporters – challenging the Liberal stronghold of North-West Norfolk – were said to have ‘fought like Baden-Powell had done in the defence of Mafeking’ and Boyle was accompanied by a brass band which played ‘See the Conquering Hero Come’.⁷⁷ Occasionally, candidates claimed that voting Unionist was an extension of national duty: Gibson-Bowles told his audience ‘I tell you it is your duty to vote for me! For the sake of your country, do your duty on the day of the election’.⁷⁸ Hare, meanwhile, reassured his South-West Norfolk audience that although ‘all of them would have liked to have been out at the front’ the young men who came forward to ‘help in his battle’ would also be helping to smite

Kruger and the Boers.⁷⁹ As John Tosh has argued, this 'militarisation of hegemonic masculinity served to bolster the indispensability of manly attributes', and it is notable that any similar emphasis on militarism and duty was almost wholly absent from East Anglian Liberal platforms.⁸⁰ Interestingly, Kit Good's analysis of masculinity and the platform finds that manliness was also often presented in military terms in both Edwardian and interwar elections.⁸¹ Given that all of Good's examples are on the Tory side, it seems possible that the khaki election prompted an enduring 'military turn' in the political presentation of masculinity amongst Conservatives, placing what seemed to be represent a powerful rhetorical weapon in their hands, which their opponents lacked.

The final part of the Unionists' imperial appeal in 1900 was a full-blooded assault on their Liberal opponents as weak, divided, and of questionable loyalty. Their general inclination to pacifism would make them 'shrink from the dread responsibility of war' (J.F. Rawlinson, Ipswich), give 'opposition to everything connected the defence of the nation' (Samuel Hoare, Norwich), and make them 'turn tail and ran away' from the Boers (Priorleau).⁸² Even if a Liberal candidate was not a pro-Boer himself, he was still from the same party as sympathisers such as Ellis, Labouchere, and Clark. This idea of 'guilt by association' was also extended more widely: to connect Liberals with the pro-Boer Irish Parliamentary Party, with Gladstone, who had abandoned Gordon in Khartoum and presided over the debacle at Majuba Hill, and with the anti-British continental press, who apparently wanted a Liberal victory.⁸³ The Unionist dichotomy – between militaristic loyalist and anti-imperial traitor – was stark, and connection with a 'disloyal' agency of any kind could contaminate a Liberal candidate.

For their part, many Liberals in 1900 were instinctively unhappy with describing themselves as 'imperialists'. Prior to the outbreak of war in 1898, the term held numerous pejorative connotations: of reckless territorial expansion, unjustified violations of sovereignty, military adventurism, political demagoguery, and authoritarianism of foreign powers such as Napoleon III's France.⁸⁴ Because few Liberals openly opposed the war itself – confining themselves mainly to criticising the government's handling of military preparations – it has often been argued that they failed to articulate a coherent counter-vision to the Unionists' avowedly imperialistic patriotism.⁸⁵ However, this view has been challenged by Hamer and Thompson, who have argued that the emerging 'Liberal-Imperialism' of Lord Rosebery – which focussed on social reform at home as well as military affairs abroad – was gaining widespread traction within the party, and by T.J. Otte's study of by-elections from 1898, which demonstrates the increased prominence of these ideas on Liberal platforms.⁸⁶ Readman has perhaps gone furthest, arguing that Liberals in the 1900s attempted to articulate an alternative domestic-centred patriotism which did not have to be tied to imperialism.⁸⁷

Interestingly, while Liberals were comfortably outscored by their opponents on mentions of both the war and imperialism in 1900, they were by no means silent on patriotism. In and outside East Anglia, Liberals mentioned this lemma virtually the same number of times as Conservatives in this election, and outscored them by nearly three to one on the national stage.⁸⁸ Some of these were simple celebrations: a King's Lynn Liberal declared 'true liberalism in politics' as being 'purely patriotic in national service and national life' and Alderman Adams (Lowestoft) claimed 'I am neither Liberal nor Conservative, I am patriotic'.⁸⁹ Indeed, both East Anglian parties, not just the Conservatives, widely used Union Jacks as party icons in 1900.⁹⁰ However, the vast majority (79%) of the 71 Liberal mentions of 'patriotism' across all 1900 corpora were challenges to the notion that the Unionists were the more patriotic party, and attempts to reclaim the idea on behalf of Liberalism. George White (North-West Norfolk) questioned the notion that 'every officer is a Tory' or that 'Tommy Atkins is a Unionist', and Richard Winfrey (South-West Norfolk) remarked that 'the Tory party might attempt to allocate themselves a monopoly on patriotism, but the Liberal Party were equally as patriotic as the Tories and equally proud of the British Empire'.⁹¹ Outside East Anglia the tone was similar. The Hartlepool

candidate Christopher Furness rubbished 'the claim which the Unionists are making that theirs is the only patriotic party' and claimed that 'he, as a Liberal, was as ready to make sacrifices for the flag as any Tory' while in Barnsley, a local Liberal complained that 'the Conservative candidate...sought to hide himself under khaki, and claimed a monopoly of patriotism, which was an insult to the intelligence of the Liberals'.⁹² These grassroots appeals closely echoed Edward Grey's attack on the 'gigantic imposture...on the Government side to claim for themselves and their supporters a monopoly of patriotism'.⁹³

As well as defending their own patriotic credentials, the Liberals also articulated their own version of 'love of country' which Readman has described as a 'high-minded patriotic constitutionalism'.⁹⁴ This 'sane imperialism' (as it was originally christened by Rosebery in 1899) was characterised by a distaste for imperial aggression, a reservation of the right to criticise military decisions and conduct, a suspicion of blind adherence to flag, and paying due attention to social conditions at home.⁹⁵ It was opposed to excessive force not simply for pacifistic reasons, but because diplomacy was often wiser. Winfrey was not alone in arguing that 'the war might have been avoided with wiser and more tactful diplomacy', something that Chamberlain (who had called Kruger a 'squeezed sponge' and likened negotiating with Russia to 'supping with the devil with a long spoon') understood poorly.⁹⁶ It was patriotic also to question the tactical decisions of generals or the state of armaments in order to learn from mistakes and maximise military efficiency, just as it was patriotic to consider the whole war machine (most of whose apparatus lay at home with the working classes in the factories) rather than fixating only on troops at the front.⁹⁷ Tory appeals to 'khaki' were thus largely condemned as attempts to bypass the rationality of voters and present the patriotic exercise of the franchise as an act of duty above a considered decision.

While this 'sane imperialism' represented a determined attempt to challenge the resolutely imperial and militaristic Unionist narrative of patriotism, its proponents were gloomily aware that they were fighting an uphill battle. Liberal appeals to 'sane-imperial' patriotism were as complex and counter-intuitive as their opponents' 'khaki' patriotism was simple and intuitive. Unionists could simply point at the Union Jack to make their argument, while the Liberal rebuttal – what Herbert Samuel called their 'policy of rational patriotism' – required lengthy exposition.⁹⁸ Indeed, the intense Liberal defensiveness over their patriotic credentials perhaps revealed an underlying pessimism in the electorate's political intelligence and a growing fear of the psychology of the herd.⁹⁹ White (North-West Norfolk) bemoaned that 'the salvation of the Tories is the short memory of voters...the curse of the military spirit which has been roused...means the neglect of all social questions' and a depressed Harcourt reflected that the electorate had conceived of the war like 'a savage tribe'.¹⁰⁰ Much the same sentiment was echoed in the progressive journal *Justice* which complained that the electorate had treated the war issue with the civic consciousness of 'a howling, brutalised savage'.¹⁰¹ Speaking in 1906, a Yarmouth Liberal solemnly recalled 'how five years ago the Tories waved the patriotic flag, beat the imperialist drum, and sounded their trumpets...the electors were hypnotised into sending the late government into power'.¹⁰² Indeed, the radical organ of London working men's clubs, *Club Life*, reacted to the defeat by complaining that 'we are glad that manhood suffrage is not an acknowledged fact...many of the people...are too naturally ignorant to understand what an election really means... they have no time to read and think – they know nothing of the great problems of our time'.¹⁰³ The Conservatives – popularly characterised as 'the stupid party' by their opponents – were in Liberal eyes well-placed to exploit this. T.R. Terrell (Norwich) complained in 1895 that 'if it were not for ignorance workingmen would not be persuaded to join the Tory party...ignorance is the force we have to fight against and defeat'.¹⁰⁴ For a Stowmarket Liberal councillor, this ignorance was sustained by the Conservative mission to 'always obstruct the wheels of progress...to train up scores of... men and women who would be saturated with Toryism'.¹⁰⁵

The idea that the Liberals traditionally saw their appeal as anchored first and foremost in rationality is consistent with general picture delineated by Jonathan Parry, Eugenio Biagini, and D.A. Hamer.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, Matthew suggests that their speakers saw public meetings as mature forums for debate and the ventilation of ideas, rather than as partisan platforms from which to enflame political passions.¹⁰⁷ However, Liberal attacks on Tory irrationality perhaps betrayed an underlying fear that the politics of jingoistic stupidity would be electorally effective. Graham Wallas described the political power of 'acts...which aim at producing an exalted emotional effect among ordinary slow-witted people'.¹⁰⁸ For Michael Freeden, 'successful ideologies require powerful emotional symbols, or...a language which evokes strong sentiments, even passion' and – as John Hobson came to famously argue in his *Psychology of Jingoism* – imperialism was a prime example.¹⁰⁹ For contemporary commentator T.E. Kebbel, the Conservatives seemed more in tune with 'the power of...the romantic, picturesque, and venerable...which speaks to the heart rather than to the head' and R.B. Haldane grudgingly admitted even in 1888 that, while the Liberals had cooler heads, the Conservatives better understood human instinct.¹¹⁰ While the Liberals may have bemoaned the electorate's defective intelligence, their analysis of the 1900 defeat also constituted an unstated admission that – while both parties advanced competing definitions of patriotism – the Unionist version was better adapted to the modern platform precisely because it was so simple and intuitive. The new democracy was an unforgiving environment for a self-consciously intellectual party, and the particular circumstances of a khaki election arguably made it politically untenable to force a dichotomy between 'sane' and 'insane' imperialism, or to decouple imperialism from patriotism.

V

While imperialism and patriotism had been made synonymous in 1900, this was to change markedly in 1906. The Unionist policy of Tariff Reform (or 'Colonial Preference' as Chamberlain initially christened it) was primarily designed to bind the mother country closer to her colonies with commercial ties.¹¹¹ The effect seems to have been to render 1906 the second-most imperial election in the period, as demonstrated by Figure 1. This picture seems inconsistent with A.K. Russell's account of this election, which contains little on imperialism, and finds that 'preservation of the Empire' was only the tenth most-cited issue in Unionist candidates' election addresses (mentioned in just 25%) and did not feature in the Liberals' top twenty.¹¹² More recent major studies, such as those of Frank Trentmann and David Thackeray, also say relatively little on Empire for this contest.¹¹³ This suggests that 1906 may be the one election in this period whose imperial dimensions have been *underestimated*.¹¹⁴ Significantly, Tariff Reform seems to be largely responsible for imperialism's prominence in this contest; a lexical attraction analysis for both grassroots corpora centred around the keywords 'imperial' and 'colony' shows that the top ten collocates (for both parties) includes 'food', 'Chamberlain', 'preference', 'closer' 'relationship', 'relations', and 'mother'.¹¹⁵ This compares with just three (in positions eight, nine, and ten) which might be explained by the Chinese labour controversy ('Cape', Transvaal', and 'coolies'). Perhaps unsurprisingly, all ten East Anglian Unionist candidates who endorsed Chamberlain's proposals as 'whole hoppers' explicitly praised the policy's imperial credentials. Francis Hervey (Bury St. Edmunds) described himself as 'a follower of that great colonial statesman, Mr. Chamberlain' and Raymond Boileau (East-Norfolk) claimed simply that 'he was an imperialist and a big Englander, and wanted to see the colonies bound more closely to their mother country'.¹¹⁶ Even amongst the remaining six East Anglian Balfourites, none openly questioned the imperialist credentials of the policy, with even the sceptical Edward Wild (Norwich) declaring that a general measure of Tariff Reform was 'a policy which would...consolidate the British Empire'.¹¹⁷ Again, this paints a somewhat different picture to Russell, who argues that divisions between Balfourites and Chamberlainites led to imperialism being used only intermittently to justify the policy.¹¹⁸

Chamberlain's renewed appeal to imperialism seemed to stem in large part from his faith in it as a populist electoral weapon, as had been evidenced by 1900.¹¹⁹ But his attempt to once again use Empire to claim the patriotic mantle misread the public's exhaustion with the war, which had dragged on until 1902, and had seemingly already contributed to a string of by-election losses.¹²⁰ This dampening of public enthusiasm did much to deflate the Unionists' khaki patriotism, and reciprocally, to inflate the Liberals' domestic-centred counter-narrative which had struggled to fly in 1900.¹²¹ In 1904, Campbell-Bannerman – echoing the platform of 1900 – declared that 'true patriotism...seeks not aggrandisement of any particular class or interest ... but the comfort, the improvement, and the best welfare of the people at large'.¹²² His lead was followed at the grassroots in the election eighteen months later, and Liberals began to articulate a patriotism without its previous imperial touchstone, with constituency speakers in and outside East Anglia mentioning the lemma 'patriot' more than four times as often as Unionists.¹²³ Edward Beauchamp (Lowestoft) believed that 'they heard a lot, probably too much, of the word "imperial". He thought all in that room were in one sense imperialists, [but] he did not agree with Mr Chamberlain in his interpretation and application of the word...if our Empire was to be maintained, young people must be trained to temperance, thrift, manliness, and honesty'.¹²⁴ The Yarmouth clergyman, Reverend Guttery, also took aim at 'the man in Birmingham' who 'was once more attempting to hold aloft the tattered flag of prostituted patriotism, and was a mere echo of the madness which had once deluded the nation, madness that they would be very glad to forget'. He went on to describe:

'Two types of patriotism. There was the patriotism such as their fathers knew...the patriotism that was willing to tell England if need be, unpopular truths, the patriotism that was ready to work, suffer ...to widen the bounds of liberty and to win the people a good life [Cheers]. And there was the patriotism of swagger, the boasting and blatancy, the patriotism of the stock exchange, the patriotism of Park Lane, the patriotism that...could not shout "rule Britannia" except with a beery hick-up.'¹²⁵

Outside East Anglia, similar criticisms of the Unionists' misplaced imperialism were made. George Lambert (Devon, South Molton) poured scorn over the 'new imperial gospel of Mr. Chamberlain' and mocked his proposal to exclude imported maize from tariffs, arguing that 'maize is the food of pigs... what imperial aspiration! Free food for an imperial race of pigs! [laughter]'.¹²⁶ In Derby, a local Liberal – J.P.G. Shires – explained the changing zeitgeist, stating that 'the Tory party seemed to imagine that they enjoyed a monopoly on patriotism, and they delighted to dub their opponents Pro-Boers or Little Englanders; but the moral sentiments of the people were rising above such insults, and they were recognising that Jingoism and so-called Imperialism was not true patriotism'.¹²⁷

Perhaps the Unionists' – and Chamberlain's – mistake after 1900 was to assume that a robust imperial appeal would automatically allow them to retain their pre-eminence as the patriotic party. If so, they were mistaken. Tariff Reform *did* succeed in once again placing Empire prominently on the 1906 election agenda, but this time it clearly failed to trump the Liberals' counter-appeal to 'domestic' patriotism, suggesting that imperialism's utility as a vote-winner was conditional, rather than universal. War weariness clearly helped tip the scales, but perhaps the decisive factor was simply that however popular the imperial credentials of Tariff Reform might have been in isolation, they were poisoned by the spectre of rising food prices. In East Anglia, vivid Liberal anecdotes of a return to 'the hungry forties' under the Corn Laws were combined with famous posters such as 'save the children from Tariff Reform' and 'the big and the little loaf' to create a simple and pithy electoral appeal powerful enough to smite Chamberlain's offering, whether wrapped in the Union Jack or not. These appeals were allied with popular exhibitionism (traditionally a Tory *forte*) featuring horseflesh

sausage displays, didactic circus acts in seaside towns such as Yarmouth and Lowestoft, and Free Trade song parties.¹²⁸ Chamberlain – the man Lloyd George described as ‘the raging bull from Birmingham ... smash[ing] up the great shop of the world’ – was cast as the pantomime villain.¹²⁹ Balfour was his comically pathetic subordinate, whom Daniel Goddard (Ipswich) dismissed as ‘the alleged leader who was really a lady help to Mr. Joseph Chamberlain’.¹³⁰ As Michael Bentley has put it, the full-bodied attack on protectionism ‘removed the need to think’.¹³¹ Such Liberal humour was widespread, and critically, one-sided; the corpus shows that the traditionally more sober Liberals now evoked more *laughter* from grassroots audiences in and outside East Anglia in 1906 by the remarkable margin of 325 hits to 162.¹³² The Liberals had managed to discover a simple populism which enabled them to exploit, rather than hide from, the mass electorate’s appetite for the politics of passion. By contrast, the Unionists were now the party lumbered with the more counter-intuitive appeal which ran against the zeitgeist. With the addition of Free Trade (with its important implications of material wellbeing) the argument that had begun as ‘sane imperialism’ in 1900 was transformed, and the Liberals found it much easier to confidently cast themselves as the patriotic defenders of British workmen. Although they developed a more punchy and dynamic popular appeal, the real Liberal success in 1906 arguably lay not in matching the Unionists as imperialists, but in successfully differentiating love of country from love of Empire (one major regional Liberal newspaper went so far as to describe Imperial Preference as ‘gross treachery’ because it betrayed the ‘great principle’ of Free Trade).¹³³ By doing so, the Liberals were able to cast the Unionists as a destabilising and dangerous political force precisely *because* they were so ideologically obsessed with imperialism through their crusade of Colonial Preference.

In conclusion, it seems surprising that historians have so often conflated imperialism and patriotism in this period. In 1900 and 1906 the two were clearly interrelated, and frequently spoken of together by both parties. However, it could be said that patriotism was by far the more explicitly contested political value. It is far harder (as demonstrated by the quantitative analyses above) to say the same of imperialism, and Liberal attempts in 1900 to fight their opponents on this territory were clearly unconvincing, and inspired ironic derision. Goddard and Noel Buxton (Ipswich) were accused of ‘masquerading in the garb of imperialists’; White (North-West Norfolk) as turning ‘increasingly red, white and blue’; Frederick Handel-Booth (King’s Lynn) as ‘a little off colour’ in his new khaki suit, and Winfrey (South-West Norfolk) as having transformed from the ‘peaceful man’ of 1895 to the ‘warlike man who went in for the Union Jack’.¹³⁴ The Liberals were arguably successful in 1906 precisely because they no longer needed to pose as imperialists to convincingly claim to be patriotic. This is not to say the Liberals entirely abandoned imperialism to their opponents (indeed, they attempted to re-establish it on less a less sordid footing in the years that followed).¹³⁵ But in 1906, Empire remained predominantly a Unionist rhetorical resource even at the party’s lowest electoral ebb; it was patriotism which was contested and successfully reclaimed by the Liberals in 1906, using many of the same domestically-focussed arguments that had failed in 1900. Indeed, this finding further suggests that while ‘sane imperialism’ was a disastrous platform to fight the ‘khaki election’, that its silver lining was indirectly to lay the intellectual foundations for a Liberal recovery five years later when the political weather changed. This implies an important qualification to Trentmann’s *Free Trade Nation*, which sees the gestation of the winning Liberal platform in 1906 as beginning from 1903 with Tariff Reform, rather than one which, at least partially, evolved from the wreckage of 1900.¹³⁶

VI

This article has argued for three major revisions to the debate on imperialism and patriotism in politics in this period. The first, as argued in section II, is that imperialism was a key election issue in this period only

intermittently— most notably in 1886, 1900, and 1906. In other contests – especially 1885, 1892, and 1895 – it was relatively seldom mentioned. This should be taken as a major challenge to historians who have assumed that the high age of imperialism must necessarily have featured imperialism as a consistently central electoral issue. This article's second argument is that it is wholly inadequate to conclude that imperialism was a contested discourse simply because both parties talked about it, and that neither enjoyed a monopoly. Throughout the 1880-1910 period, the Conservatives mentioned the empire around twice as often, and when they did, connected it more consistently with politically and emotively charged values, concepts, and traditions. The languages of imperialism might well have resembled Thompson's 'array of empty boxes waiting to be filled, emptied, and refilled by competing discourses' but this stock check has found – in the world of party politics at least – that a hefty majority of them held Conservative contents. The final argument is that historians' reluctance to differentiate between the languages of imperialism and patriotism has led to them being unhelpfully lumped together. Love of country and imperialist credentials could become interchangeable in certain specific political circumstances (namely in 1900) but there is little evidence that the khaki election formed an enduring link between Empire and patriotism in the political arena. Indeed, in the very next election in 1906 the Unionists once again fought a heavily imperial campaign, but were nonetheless outmanoeuvred by the Liberals on patriotism. The patriotic, not the imperial, was thus the more keenly contested political discourse throughout the period, and was thus almost certainly the more electorally significant.

It could be argued that these three shortcomings that have hampered the debate on imperialism in this period have in each case stemmed from a historiographical overreliance on the election of 1900. This big-data analysis allows us to set this famous contest in context— as an outlier. Future qualitative scholarship on imperialism and patriotism in late-Victorian and Edwardian British politics could fruitfully move away from this important but unique election, and concentrate instead on others which have received considerably less attention. Such an approach will allow us to set imperialism in its proper place as one election issue amongst others, and also to better understand how it was presented in overlooked campaigns which were nonetheless far more typical of popular political life in these three decades.

In closing, it should be stressed that the above conclusions are not an attempt to downplay the importance of 1900 as a landmark contest. On the contrary, this article has argued that imperialism was important in this election not so much because it represented the high water mark of Empire as a political issue in these three decades, but because the trauma of khaki campaign critically damaged the Liberals' traditional faith in elections as exercises in public intellect. By re-presenting the 'sane imperialism' of 1900 in patriotic packaging, the Liberals were able to match the Conservatives as promoters of simple and populist electoral languages, and thus leave behind the highbrow but incoherent 'faddism' of the 1890s. The experience of 1900 was thus a milestone not only in the move towards a more electorally dynamic new Liberalism, but also because it helped to firmly close the door on the mid-Victorian ideal of high-minded electoral politics with the considered 'rational' voter at its centre. Imperialism's importance as a consistently central election issue may have been exaggerated, but its moment in the sun nonetheless contributed to a more fundamental transformation in party culture which ironically affected the Liberal party more than the Conservatives.

Notes

- ¹ M.F. Ames, *An ABC for Baby Patriots* (London, 1899), 5-7. Similar books included T. Stevens, *Babes of the Empire: An Alphabet for young England* (London, 1902) and J. Hassall, *A Naval Alphabet* (London, 1901).
- ² MacDonald, *Language of Empire*, 7.
- ³ For the centrality of public speeches and meetings to electoral life in these years, see Lawrence, *Electing Our Masters*.
- ⁴ Mackenzie, *Propaganda and Empire and Imperialism and Popular Culture*; Ward, *End of Empire*, 4.
- ⁵ A. Burton, 'New narratives of imperial politics in the nineteenth century', in Hall and Rose, *Empire*, 212. Subscription to the 'maximalist thesis' is of course not universal amongst cultural historians. The obvious 'minimalist' dissenter is Porter, *Absent Minded Imperialists*.
- ⁶ Thompson, *Imperial Britain*, 39.
- ⁷ Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*, 163, 188; Roberts, 'Popular Conservatism', 237, 242.
- ⁸ See Green, *Crisis*, ch.2; Hamer, *Liberal Politics*, 231.
- ⁹ H.C.G. Matthew, 'Rhetoric and politics in Great Britain, 1860-1950', in Waller, *Modern Britain*, 49. McKenzie and Silver argue on similar lines, seeing Crystal Palace as the moment Disraeli 'picked up the banner of imperialism'. See McKenzie and Silver, *Angels in Marble*, 49-50.
- ¹⁰ Thompson, *Imperial Britain*, 15-16.
- ¹¹ Shannon, *Age of Salisbury*; Rhodes James, 'Conservative Party', 511-17.
- ¹² Green, *Crisis*, 54, 76. This view is also shared by Charmley, *History of Conservative Politics*, 6-8; Savage, 'General Election of 1886', 560.
- ¹³ Lloyd, *Election of 1880*, 38, 141; Parry, *Rise and Fall*, 290-2; Matthew, *Liberal Imperialists*, 3-36.
- ¹⁴ Studies which focus exclusively, or predominantly, on the 1900 election include: Readman, 'General Election of 1900'; Price, *An Imperial War*; Sharpe, '1900 General Election'; Schneer, *Imperial Metropolis*, 229-60.
- ¹⁵ Readman, 'General Election of 1900', 109-11; Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*, 182; Sharpe, '1900 General Election', p.411; Schneer, *Imperial Metropolis*, 229-60.
- ¹⁶ Price, *Imperial War*, 105, 120-128. Price argued that the war was the primary issue only in constituencies with a pro-Boer Liberal candidate, and those with few working class voters.
- ¹⁷ Porter, *Absent-Minded Imperialists*, 216, 238-9; Brodie, *Politics of the Poor*, 101-3; Feuchtwanger, *Democracy and Empire*, 240; Brooks, *Age of Upheaval*.
- ¹⁸ Readman, 'Liberal Party', 280-82; Rhodes James, 'Conservative Party', 515-16; Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*, 200-1.
- ¹⁹ Thompson, 'Tariff Reform', 1034-5, 1053-4.
- ²⁰ Jackson, *Irish Home Rule*, chs.3-5; Thackeray, *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*, chs. 2-3. The lack of interest in the imperial aspects of the elections of 1910 is reflected by the scant coverage in Blewett, *Peers*, where neither 'empire' nor 'imperial' appear in the 24-page index.
- ²¹ Thompson, 'Language of Imperialism', 147-150; Macdonald, *Language of Empire*; Readman, 'Liberal Party', 271; Taylor, 'John Bull', 126; Green, *Crisis*, 59-60, 67; Otte, 'Foreign Policy in 1898', 422-4; Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*, 54-83; Lynch, *Liberal Party*, 156-7, 166-67; Roberts, *Political Movements*, 103.
- ²² Thompson, 'Language of Imperialism', 147-150.
- ²³ Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*, 164; Roberts, *Political Movements*, 103.
- ²⁴ Green, *Crisis*, 67; Readman, 'Liberal Party', 272; Cunningham, 'Patriotism', 8-33.
- ²⁵ E.g. Craig and Thompson, *Languages of Politics*; Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*, chs.2-3 (both titled 'electoral languages and discourses'); Readman, 'Liberal Party', 301. A recent influential conference (April 2009) held at Durham University featuring many scholars in this field was also titled 'The Languages of Politics Conference'.
- ²⁶ See Thompson, 'Language of Imperialism', 164.
- ²⁷ Green, *Crisis*, 76; Price, *Imperial War*, 128; Roberts, *Political Movements*, 103.
- ²⁸ Potter, 'Empire, cultures and identities', 60; Thompson, *Imperial Britain*, 190-4.
- ²⁹ See Blaxill, 'Quantifying the Language of British Politics', 313-41.
- ³⁰ Speeches were not, of course, the only contemporary tool of political communication. Others included posters, cartoons, and handbills, but speeches were seen by contemporaries (and subsequently by historians) as overwhelmingly the most important, certainly until 1918. See H. Jephson, *The Platform, its Rise and Progress*, 2 vols. (London, 1892); Matthew, 'Rhetoric', 40-6; Meisel, *Public Speech*, ch.5; Lawrence, *Electing Our Masters*, 71-95.
- ³¹ See Lynch, *Liberal Party*, 11-21; Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*.
- ³² See Blaxill, 'Joseph Chamberlain'; 'Electoral Politics'.
- ³³ While contemporary newspaper speech reporting (although comprehensive and often verbatim) is not a perfect proxy for political discourse in general, they can nonetheless be used to assess broad questions of the prevalence of key themes in electoral language. See Blaxill, 'Language of Electoral Politics', 44-46.
- ³⁴ A regional case-study provides enough text to compile a large corpus featuring speeches from a range of constituencies, while also being small enough to make a parallel investigation of qualitative evidence feasible. East Anglia was chosen because it is the only regional corpus of political language in this period currently available. For a justification of its original selection, see 'Electoral Politics', 23-24.
- ³⁵ This corpus is compiled from speeches delivered across a wide range of constituencies (at least forty per election subsample) selected by the current availability of newspapers through the *British Newspaper Archive*. It is designed to be as representative as possible of Great Britain as a whole, featuring an equal borough-to-county mix, proportional weighting for England, Scotland, and Wales, and proportional weighting for the six constituency categories ('Urban predominantly middle-class', 'Urban mixed class', 'Urban predominantly working class', 'Mixed urban/rural', 'Rural' and 'Mining') defined in Blewett, *Peers*, 488-94. See 'Electoral Politics', 227-29, for the full list of constituencies used.
- ³⁶ I.e. speeches delivered by the leading lights of the two parties (cabinet and shadow cabinet members).
- ³⁷ See Blaxill, 'Quantifying'; 'Electoral Politics'.
- ³⁸ 'Flag' also includes synonyms, e.g. 'Union Jack'.
- ³⁹ For example 'India' and 'Boer' are words which might intuitively have been included in the taxonomy, but neither correlated reliably to imperialism throughout the whole period, so were excluded. Both were reliable correlates in certain elections (e.g. 1880 and 1900) but to keep comparisons fair across the whole period, it was essential to compare only like with like through a diachronically robust set of keywords.
- ⁴⁰ KWIC analyses list all words in their parent sentences, allowing each 'hit' to be manually checked, and potentially categorised.
- ⁴¹ The technicalities of keyword selection, and text-retrieval itself are complex and detailed processes, and there is not space for an exhaustive methodological description here. For more detail, see Blaxill, 'Electoral Politics', 46-49.
- ⁴² Across all nine elections, in all three corpora, the Conservatives' net score is 3499, the Liberals' 2085.
- ⁴³ Across all nine elections, in both grassroots corpora, the Conservatives' net score is 2273, the Liberals' 1190.
- ⁴⁴ For historians' interpretation of imperialism in 1895, see above n. 8-15.
- ⁴⁵ Ensor, *England, 1870-1914*, 221.

⁴⁶ A five word taxonomy for Local Veto in 1895, consisting of 'Local Veto', 'beer', 'drink', 'public house' and 'publican' scores 64 amongst East Anglian Conservatives and 51 amongst Liberals. Outside East Anglia, it scores 62 amongst Conservatives and 36 amongst Liberals. On the national stage, it scores 44 among Conservatives and 37 amongst Liberals. The combined 1895 Local Veto score between both parties across all three corpora is thus 294, whereas the 1895 imperialism equivalent score is just 248.

⁴⁷ Readman, '1895 General Election', 483. 'House of Lords' (in the context of reform) registers corpus scores of 44 and 112 respectively for Conservatives and Liberals in East Anglia, 72 and 97 outside East Anglia, and 121 and 97 on the national stage. Comparing these readings with Figure 1 shows that the imperialism taxonomy is outscored in every corpus for 1895 except East Anglian Conservatives.

⁴⁸ Readman, '1895 General Election', 493.

⁴⁹ Conservative National Union, *The Campaign Guide* (1895), 544-58.

⁵⁰ The combined scores between the parties for direct mentions of the Malt Tax (tracked with 'malt', checked with KWIC) in East Anglian county divisions was 81, and 91 for the Game Laws (tracked with 'game' and similarly checked). This compares to 75 for all five imperial lemmas combined.

⁵¹ The cross-party aggregates for the issue of Church Disestablishment in 1885 (tracked via the lemmas 'church' and 'disestablishment' and checked with KWICS) are 263 in East Anglia, and 293 outside. For Land Reform (tracked with 'land' and similarly checked) the scores are 288 in East Anglia, and 180 outside. For Free Education (tracked with the lemmas 'school', 'education', and 'child') the scores are 309 in East Anglia and 353 outside. This compares to scores (for all five of our imperial lemmas combined) of 95 in East Anglia, and 54 outside.

⁵² This issue, tracked with the lemmas 'council', 'district', 'parish' and 'local government', registered 181 mentions between the parties in East Anglia, 122 outside, and 90 on the national stage. The five imperial lemmas combined in 1892 totalled 75, 119, and 224 in each corpus respectively.

⁵³ In January 1910, simply the lemma 'pension' registered (amongst Liberals) 133 mentions in East Anglia, and 56 outside. This compares to equivalent scores of 48 and 38 for the five imperial lemmas respectively. For the Conservatives, the opposite was true, and 'pension' registered 41 mentions in East Anglia and 36 outside, compared with equivalent respective scores of 172 and 134 for the imperialism taxonomy. For December 1910, the lemma 'referendum' alone scores (for Conservatives and Liberals respectively): 27 and 35 in East Anglia, 35 and 32 outside, and 64 and 58 on the national stage. The scores for the lemmas 'empire' and 'imperial' combined (for Conservatives and Liberals respectively) are 55 and 18 in East Anglia, 54 and 15 outside, and 54 and 23 on the national stage.

⁵⁴ Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*; Lynch, *Liberal Party*.

⁵⁵ 'Word-span' is the closeness of a collocate to a keyword. For example, a word-span of five includes all words which appear up to five words to the right or left of the designated keyword.

⁵⁶ 'Lexical attraction' is how likely two words are to appear within a given word-span, relative to average chance throughout the text. The closer the words typically appear to each other, the higher the lexical attraction. For example, 'House' is very strongly lexically attracted to 'Lords' and 'Commons', and 'Tariff' to 'Reform', while 'Kruger' is attracted to 'Boer' (albeit more loosely). The degree of lexical attraction can be measured by the Mutual Information (MI) score. For methodological discussion on collocation theory, see Sinclair, *Corpus*, 109-22.

⁵⁷ This analysis is performed using a word-span of five. It also uses a minimum frequency threshold of ten hits, meaning that each word has to co-occur with 'empire' at least ten times to be included. This guards against confusing distortion by exceptional words which might be strongly lexically attracted to 'empire', but occur an insignificantly tiny number of times. Examples are 'Monmouthshire' and 'biscuit' which occur just twice each in the Conservative corpora, but happen to have very high MI scores.

⁵⁸ Synsemantic: words which are meaningful only when accompanied by other words.

⁵⁹ Savage, *General Election of 1886*, 560.

⁶⁰ The aggregate scores of 278 mentions for the Conservatives, and 110 for the Liberals in East Anglia, and 230 and 150 respectively in constituencies outside, and 192 and 209 respectively on the national stage.

⁶¹ In 1895, the totals for these five lemmas for both parties were: 15 (East Anglia); 25 (Outside East Anglia); 21 (National). In 1900, the equivalent totals were: 200, 197, and 164 respectively.

⁶² In addition, the average score for 'war' in the four previous elections in East Anglia was 83. Even in 1880 (the last previous election which might reasonably have been described as 'khaki') its tally of 216 in East Anglia is still less than half that of 1900. On the national stage, 'war' increased from 16 mentions amongst both parties in 1895 to 389 in 1900. Outside of East Anglia, the equivalent respective scores were 27 and 472.

⁶³ This taxonomy consists of: 'Boer', 'Kruger', 'war', 'Transvaal', 'ammunition', 'gun', 'army', 'soldier', 'military', 'traitor', 'battle', Roberts, troop', 'defend', 'fight', 'victory', 'Africa', 'enemy', 'diplomacy', 'peace', 'opponent', 'Majuba', and 'navy'.

⁶⁴ For analysis of Ireland in 1886, see Blaxill, 'Electoral Politics', 97.

⁶⁵ *Norwich Argus*, 29 Sept 1900; *Eastern Evening News*, 8 Oct 1900.

⁶⁶ *Lynn Advertiser*, 28 Sept 1900. For further examples, see *Norfolk Argus*, 29 Sept 1900 (Norwich) and 13 Oct 1900 (Mid-Norfolk).

⁶⁷ *Norfolk Argus*, 29 Sept 1900; *East Anglian Daily Times*, 29 Sept 1900.

⁶⁸ *EAST ANGLIAN DAILY TIMES*, 29 Sept 1900.

⁶⁹ Lloyd, *General Election of 1880*, p.38, 141; Parry, *Rise and Fall*, 290-2.

⁷⁰ *Lynn Advertiser*, 5 Oct 1900.

⁷¹ See Blaxill, 'Joseph Chamberlain'.

⁷² These were: Colomb (Yarmouth), Follett (North-Norfolk), Pretymann (Woodbridge), Gibson-Bowles (Lynn), Priorleau (East-Norfolk), Mann (South-Norfolk), Hare (South-West Norfolk), Boyle (Mid-Norfolk). Military candidates were also important elsewhere; Windscheffel notes that six of the twelve new London Unionist MPs in 1900 had connections to the army or navy, and Lynch demonstrates that Major Stuart-Wortley, who initially seemed a weak candidate for South Oxfordshire, swiftly became an asset. See Windscheffel, *Popular Conservatism*, 182-83; Lynch, *Liberal Party*, 159.

⁷³ *Norfolk Argus*, 29 Sept 1900.

⁷⁴ *Lynn Advertiser*, 28 Sept 1900.

⁷⁵ The equivalent average scores across all elections (1880-1910) were 228 (Conservative) and 172 (Liberal).

⁷⁶ *Norfolk Argus*, 29 Sept 1900.

⁷⁷ *Lynn Advertiser*, 25 May 1900; *Norfolk Argus*, 13 Oct 1900.

⁷⁸ *Lynn Advertiser*, 28 Sept 1900.

⁷⁹ *Lynn Advertiser*, 28 Sept 1900.

⁸⁰ Tosh, Dudink, Hagemann, *Masculinities*, 55.

⁸¹ K. Good, "'Quit ye like men": platform manliness and electioneering, 1895-1939' in McCormack, *Public men*, 158-60.

⁸² *EAST ANGLIAN DAILY TIMES*, 28 Sept 1900; *Norfolk Argus*, 29 Sept 1900; *Norfolk Chronicle*, 6 Oct 1900.

⁸³ *Norfolk Argus*, 29 Sept 1900; Mann (South-Norfolk), *EAST ANGLIAN DAILY TIMES*, 29 Sept 1900, Eastlagh (Lowestoft).

⁸⁴ Green, *Crisis*, 60; Hamer, *Liberal Politics*, 270-71, 287; Sykes, *Rise and Fall*, 134-36. For the shifting semantic meanings of the word 'imperialism' in late-Victorian politics, see Koebner and Schmidt, *Imperialism*, ch.6; Parry, *Patriotism*, 387-99.

- ⁸⁵ See Cunningham, 'The Conservative Party and patriotism' in Colls and Dodd, *Englishness*, 283-307. This thesis has been influential, and is often cited by scholars in other fields. See Readman, 'Liberal Party', 270.
- ⁸⁶ Otte, 'Foreign Policy in 1898', 423; Thompson, 'Language of Imperialism', 156-9; Hamer, *Liberal Politics*, 263-77.
- ⁸⁷ Readman, 'Liberal Party', 272.
- ⁸⁸ The parties were tied at 13 mentions in East Anglia. In constituencies outside, the Liberals trailed the Conservatives slightly by 17 to 19. But on the national stage, the scores were 41-14.
- ⁸⁹ *Lynn News*, 29 Sept 1900; *EAST ANGLIAN DAILY TIMES*, 28 Sept 1900.
- ⁹⁰ See for example, reports of meetings in *Ipswich Journal*, 6 Oct 1900; *Cambridge Express*, 29 Sept 1900; *Eastern Evening News*, 16 Jul 1895.
- ⁹¹ *Lynn News*, 29 Sept, 26 Jun 1900.
- ⁹² *Daily Gazette for Middlesbrough*, 26 Sept 1900; *Sheffield Independent*, 4 Oct 1900.
- ⁹³ *The Times*, 27 Sept 1900.
- ⁹⁴ Readman, 'Liberal Party', 280-2.
- ⁹⁵ *The Times*, 6 May 1899.
- ⁹⁶ *Lynn News*, 26 Jun 1900; *Suffolk Chronicle*, 21 Sept 1900; *EAST ANGLIAN DAILY TIMES*, 26 Sept 1900. Speeches of Winfrey (South-West Norfolk), Stevenson (Eye), and Buxton (Ipswich) respectively.
- ⁹⁷ *Lynn News*, 26 Jun and 26 Sept 1900. Speeches of Winfrey (South-West Norfolk) and Handel-Booth (Lynn) respectively.
- ⁹⁸ Samuel cited in Clarke, *Liberals*, 61.
- ⁹⁹ M. Freeden, 'Liberal passions: Reason and Emotion in late- and post-Victorian Liberal thought' in Ghosh and Goldman *Victorian Britain* 145.
- ¹⁰⁰ *Lynn News*, 16 Jun, 29 Sept 1900; *Eastern Daily Press*, 29 Sept 1900.
- ¹⁰¹ *Justice*, 20 Oct 1900.
- ¹⁰² *Yarmouth Mercury*, 1 Jan 1906.
- ¹⁰³ *Club Life*, 6 Oct 1900.
- ¹⁰⁴ *Norfolk Chronicle*, 6 Jul 1895.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Bury Free Press* 8 Sept 1900, speech of Councillor Hooper (Stowmarket). For similar criticisms, see *Diss Express* 5 Jul 1885, (Councillor Nudd); *Eastern Evening News*, 3 Jul 1895 (G. Lee); *Lynn News*, 13 Jul 1895 (T. Cozens-Hardy and Miss Veness).
- ¹⁰⁶ See Hamer, *Liberal Politics*; Parry, *Rise and Fall*; Biagini, *Liberty, retrenchment and reform*.
- ¹⁰⁷ Matthew, 'Rhetoric', 51-52.
- ¹⁰⁸ G. Wallas, *Human Nature in Politics* (London, 1908), 35-36.
- ¹⁰⁹ Freeden, 'Liberal Passions', 136; J. Hobson, *The Psychology of Jingoism* (London, 1901).
- ¹¹⁰ T. Kebbel, 'The Spirit of Party', *The Nineteenth Century*, XI (March 1882), 378-88; R. Haldane, *The Liberal Creed* (London, 1888), 464, 472.
- ¹¹¹ Marsh, *Entrepreneur*, 583-6.
- ¹¹² See Russell, *Liberal Landslide*, 65, 79, 83. The difference in emphasis between speeches and addresses almost certainly arises on account of the fact that the latter were very different political texts, about what candidates *thought* would be important in campaigns, rather than what actually transpired to be.
- ¹¹³ Thackeray, 'Rethinking', 191-213; *Conservatism for the Democratic Age*; Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation*.
- ¹¹⁴ Thompson, 'Tariff Reform', 1034-5, 1053-4, has also suggested that the imperial dimensions of 1906 have been underestimated.
- ¹¹⁵ Analysis includes all grassroots speakers in and outside East Anglia in 1906. Because this analysis concerns just one election, the word-span is expanded to 7, and minimum frequency threshold to 3.
- ¹¹⁶ *Eastern Evening News*, 20 Jan 1906.
- ¹¹⁷ *Stowmarket Post*, 11 Jan 1906; *Norwich Argus*, 6 Jan 1906.
- ¹¹⁸ Russell, *Liberal Landslide*, 87-90.
- ¹¹⁹ Green, 'Radical Conservatism', 667-92, 686-8; Jay, *Joseph Chamberlain*, 301-2; Judd, *Radical Joe*, 241-42; Garvin and Amery, *Joseph Chamberlain*, vol. XI, 795; Marsh, *Entrepreneur*, 626.
- ¹²⁰ P. Readman and L. Blaxill, 'Edwardian By-Elections' in Readman and Otte, *By-Elections*, 239-40.
- ¹²¹ Readman, 'Liberal Party', 300-1; *Land and Nation*, 34-5.
- ¹²² H. Campbell-Bannerman, *The Khaki Government: How it Fares in June, 1904: Report of a Speech Delivered by the Right Hon. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, G.C.B., M.P. on Thursday, June 2, 1904* (London, 1904), 9.
- ¹²³ 34 mentions to 8 between both grassroots corpora.
- ¹²⁴ *EAST ANGLIAN DAILY TIMES*, 2 Jan 1906.
- ¹²⁵ *Yarmouth Mercury*, 13 Jan 1906.
- ¹²⁶ *Western Times*, 16 Dec 1905.
- ¹²⁷ *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 11 Jan 1906.
- ¹²⁸ Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation*, 81-133.
- ¹²⁹ *The Times*, 1 Jan 1906.
- ¹³⁰ *EAST ANGLIAN DAILY TIMES*, 12 Jan 1906.
- ¹³¹ Bentley, *Climax*, 109.
- ¹³² See Blaxill, 'Electoral Politics', 199.
- ¹³³ *West Briton and Cornwall Advertiser*, 16 May 1907.
- ¹³⁴ *EAST ANGLIAN DAILY TIMES*, 2 Oct 1900; *Lynn Advertiser*, 5 Oct 1900 and 28 Sept-1900.
- ¹³⁵ The Liberal attempt to redefine imperialism in their terms after 1906 was evident in speeches given to the Colonial Conference of 1907, for example by Churchill. See *Morning Post*, 20 May 1907. See also R. Jebb, *The Imperial Conference*, vol.2 (London, 1911), ch.XIII. Indeed, a pamphlet issued by the influential Cobden club in 1910 argued that Empire was a noble cause, but 'to use Empire sentiment...for party gain ought to be judged a great offence'. See. E. Pulsford, *The Empire Aspect of Preference* (London, 1910), 24.
- ¹³⁶ See Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation*, which does not contain a single reference to the election of 1900.

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